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Adams has come a long way from Minnesota theater

By Colin Covert
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Welcome to mid-November, unofficially called "Amy Adams Month" by film distributors and fans alike.

Actually, it may be her year. With two gripping roles in a double feature of sophisticated, unconventional prestige films, Adams could soon be double-dipping for yet another Oscar nomination, her sixth.

Not bad for a national treasure who was launched to Hollywood's A-list by a dinner theater in Minnesota. Or a leading lady so down to earth that when she recently returned to the state for a close friend's wedding, she set up the dinner tables and moved the chairs.

Those new roles represent a fresh path for an actress who proved she could tackle countless characters since she started her first official acting gig for audiences digging in to servings of chicken breast and Minnesota wild rice dressing. She was discovered as a novice stage performer by Michael Brindisi, president and artistic director at Chanhassen Dinner Theatres.

"I got to work there for three years, made a lot of great friends and learned a lot. I had worked at other theaters in Colorado and Michael brought me into Minnesota. A member of the cast had gotten hurt so I came to fill in for a couple of weeks, then ended up coming back and being a full-time actress and singer/dancer there."

Amy Adams plays a linguistics professor recruited to communicate with extraterrestrials in "Arrival."

Brindisi met her at a theater performance in Boulder. "It was a good cast, but this girl in a little cameo role was just jumping off the stage. Just radiating." He quickly brought her to Minneapolis and cast her in her first big-time production as a tap-dancing pig.

"She is a superstar with a kind of variety and range that I saw happen right in front of me. Really a great actress, great singer, dancer, always incredibly funny. And super-nice, too. She's good in everything; I've never seen her make a bad movie. And I make claim to having discovered her," he laughed.

Adams, born in Italy, raised in Colorado and based in Los Angeles, says, "Minnesota is my adopted home." Talking by phone from L.A. last week, she was as interested in learning how the local fall weather was going as in promoting her latest career landmarks.

In Denis Villeneuve's "Arrival," Adams plays a linguistics professor recruited by the military to communicate with mysterious, newly arrived extraterrestrials and defuse a conflict that could lead to the end of the world. It's a film where her dialogue is sparse, but her flickering expressions of confusion, curiosity and concern are eloquent. Less than two weeks later, she returns in Tom Ford's "Nocturnal Animals" playing an upscale Manhattanite who receives from her ex-husband what may be a violent book manuscript – or his outline of a revenge plot against her.

"I'm so lucky," Adams said. "I really love both films. They're so different. They're each unique stories about very different women allowed to play out in a thoughtful way by each director. It's an embarrassment of riches, really."

The list of top-ranked film directors who have recruited her over the past two decades is a Who's Who of cinema: Steven Spielberg, Spike Jonze, Tim Burton, Mike Nichols, Paul Thomas Anderson, Nora Ephron and David O. Russell. Still, she doesn't take her high position on the industry's Must Hire roster very seriously. "There are some that I can't work with," she joked. "I keep trying. They won't return my phone calls."

Adams has a diverse portfolio. She has played dewy-eyed innocents in her indie breakthrough "Junebug" (her first Oscar nomination) and the Disney films "Enchanted" and "The Muppets." She transformed into hard-as-nails cynics in "The Fighter," "The Master" and "American Hustle." She went toe to toe with Clint Eastwood in "Trouble With the Curve," Leonardo DiCaprio in "Catch Me if You Can" and Meryl Streep in "Doubt" and "Julie & Julia." She made Lois Lane the only living, breathing human in "Man of Steel" and "Batman v Superman."

Zack Snyder, director of both comic book sagas, praised her as "one of the most versatile and respected actresses in films today."

"Arrival" is unlike anything else in her resume, she said. "It was like nothing I had seen before and I found myself very emotionally connected to it in a way that was unexpected. That's neat."

Entering her 40s and recently having a daughter has affected her outlook on what kind of stories she's interested in telling.

"Absolutely, I feel like a very different person than I did even 10 or five years ago. My connection to the character in 'Arrival,'" a warm, scholarly mother contemplating her relationship with her daughter, "might have been deep, though it would have had a different tone to it. Now I feel very linked to her and I think motherhood plays a large part of that. The story has a deep emotional undercurrent that leads to a revelation as well."

In that film and "Nocturnal Animals," she said, "I do see parallels in the messages about life and love, what we keep and what we let go."

If there are any other would-be beginners needing advice, she recommends: "Don't be focused on the result. Build a life, don't build a career. And check in with your hometown, or surrogate hometown."

Skeptics fear Netflix is ruining movie experience

By Glenn Kenny
New York Times

Almost half a century ago, if you had enough disposable income and a certain amount of technical agility, you could have your own YouTube channel. Sort of. You could share your videos with friends who came over to your place to watch them, or you lend them to pals who had hardware similar to yours.

Sony introduced the Portapak, a 20-pound camera-video recorder pairing, in the late '60s. The music journalist Lisa Robinson and her husband, Richard Robinson, a writer and record producer, were among the first Manhattanites to adopt the technology.

"We schlepped that damn thing everywhere," Lisa Robinson recollected. They taped live shows and their own parties – "we recorded Lou Reed and the rock critic Richard Meltzer doing an acoustic version of 'Walk on the Wild Side' at our house." When Sony introduced the Betamax VCR the next decade, they taped television shows and showed their tapes to friends on an early projection TV.

The Betamax format compelled a micro approach: Early cassettes could record only an hour's worth of material. Once the Sony rival JVC introduced the VHS format, which could record two hours on a single cassette, and subsequent refinements yielded variable recording speeds, the idea of Hollywood movies on home video became a practical reality.

Movies on home video created a new and highly lucrative revenue stream for Hollywood. But as I learned in the mid-1980s when I worked at the consumer electronics magazine Video Review, as much money as home video made, the movie industry always hated it. The idea of consumers actually owning motion pictures was anathema to them.

This never changed; as the DVD format took off in the 1990s, I remember one conversation with an insider, who said, "Hollywood can't wait to stop making little aluminum discs." Nobody, in my experience, would ever speak of this on the record. Indeed, beating the bushes to even get a home video executive to do so now, I came up with nothing.

Which brings us to movies on streaming video. By streaming I mean theoretically unlimited access to movies, in the form of digital files viewable on a wide variety of personal devices, from a home-theater projection system to a phone, accessible to consumers via an ever-growing number of a la carte services. Even if you buy titles for permanent use, as several services offer, they're not physical things that you have in your home; you can't really lend them out. (Yes, many services allow multiple household members to log in, but it's not as if you're going to extend that privilege to a random acquaintance.)

Winona Ryder stars in Netflix's "Stranger Things."

True ownership once again rests relatively securely (piracy aside) with the corporations that own the copyrights. While corporate interests love it, creative artists are more skeptical.

"If you're playing the movie on a telephone, you will never in a trillion years experience the film," director David Lynch lamented almost a decade ago.

His words have not been widely heeded. Recently, in the Washington Post, a writer boasted that he not only watches streaming television series on whatever device he likes, but that he does so at double speed.

This is called consumer choice. Which has many, many discontents. The expectation that streaming video would yield a garden of nearly endless cinematic delights to the waiting world is in some respects starting to pay off; sites like Fandor, Mubi, the Warner Archive service and the newly introduced Filmstruck look like individual Edens to serious movie buffs, but the bigger players – like Netflix and Amazon – seem less concerned with what looks to them like niche interests.

In October, Matt Zoller Seitz, a TV and film critic for New York magazine and rogerebert.com, observed on Twitter, "I do worry that the cultural dominance of Netflix, which no longer cares about older films, is destroying cinephilia as we once knew it."

This started a still-continuing conversation on and off the amorphous entity known as Film Twitter, yielding observations like "The film selection on Netflix is much worse than your average Blockbuster. It's like a gas station DVD collection."

The service has 47 million subscribers in the United States, and its movie library is affected not only by the limitations of particular licensing deals, which means that the number of titles is constantly contracting and expanding, but also by what subscribers actually watch.

To use the contemporary buzzword "curated," Netflix would argue that it does indeed take a curatorial approach to movies, but one that's appropriate to a consumer product rather than a museum. It does not see its mission as a conservational one. And the hard truth about the future of streaming services is that even those with the loftiest stated ambitions will be obliged to balance those ambitions against market demand.

Because of Netflix's interface, its jam-packed welcome menu, and the sheer amount of material that turns up in browsing – not to mention what Seitz terms its cultural dominance – a lot of users have the impression that the service is one-stop entertainment shopping that has everything. That's simply not true. And Netflix doesn't aspire, or pretend, to have everything, either.

In the department of unintended paradox, however, one of the most heralded recent original TV series on Netflix is "Stranger Things." This sci-fi/horror story set in the 1980s draws on a rich swath of cinematic influences from that era, including "E.T. The Extraterrestrial," the first two movies of the "Alien" franchise, John Carpenter's "The Thing," "Firestarter" and more – none of which is currently viewable on Netflix. ("E.T." was offered by the service, and was recently discontinued; Netflix has an agreement with Steven Spielberg's Amblin to offer a group of its titles, and that film is likely to return to the service soon.)

One of the more potentially head-spinning features of streaming video is that this state of affairs could change almost overnight. I won't ask for any credit should some eager Netflix programming exec put together a "Deeper Into 'Stranger Things'" movie package.

MOVIE LISTINGS

ASSISTED LISTENING DEVICES AVAILABLE · WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE · CC CLOSED CAPTIONING · DVS DESCRIPTIVE VIDEO SERVICES AVAILABLE

AMHERST

Dipson Amherst Theatre CC, DVS
3500 MAIN ST., BUFFALO 716-834-7655
Hacksaw Ridge 12:50, 3:50, 6:50, 9:45
Moonlight 1:00, 1:30, 3:30, 4:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:30, 9:30

AMC Maple Ridge 8
4276 MAPLE RD, AMHERST
• Trolls DVS CC 2:00, 7:00
• Trolls 3D DVS CC 11:15, 4:45, 10:00
• Doctor Strange DVS CC 12:45, 3:45, 6:45, 9:30
• Doctor Strange 3D DVS CC 10:00, 10:45, 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:15
Inferno DVS CC 10:45, 1:40, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30
• Almost Christmas DVS CC 10:15, 1:15, 4:15, 7:00, 9:45
The Accountant DVS CC 4:45, 10:15
Tyler Perry's Boo! A Madea Halloween DVS CC 10:15, 1:45, 7:45
• Hacksaw Ridge DVS CC 10:30, 12:45, 3:45, 6:45, 9:45
• Arrival DVS CC 10:00, 1:00, 4:00, 7:15, 10:00

Screening Room Cinema Cafe
3131 SHERIDAN DR, AMHERST 716-837-0376
Divergence 1:00 pm
Shortwave 3:30 pm

ANGOLA

New Angola Theater
72 N MAIN ST., ANGOLA 716-549-4866
Call theater for showtimes

BUFFALO

North Park Theatre
1428 HERTEL AVENUE, BUFFALO 716-836-7411
A Man Called Ove 2:00, 4:30, 7:00
Miss Hokusai 9:30 pm
Rocky 11:30 am

Regal Elmwood Center 16
2001 ELMWOOD AVE., BUFFALO 844-462-7342-273
Space Jam 20th Anniversary 2:00, 7:00
Almost Christmas DVS CC (1:40) 4:20, 7:10, 9:50
Arrival DVS CC (1:10) 4:10, 7:20, 10:20
• Doctor Strange 3D DVS CC (12:30, 1:30) 4:30, 6:30, 7:30, 10:30
• Doctor Strange DVS CC (1:00, 3:30) 4:00, 7:00, 9:30, 10:00
Shut In CC (12:25, 2:45) 5:05, 7:35, 9:55
• Chaar Sahibzaade: Rise of Banda Singh Bahadur 3D (1:20) 4:45, 4:00
Hacksaw Ridge DVS CC (12:50, 3:50) 7:05, 10:05
• Trolls DVS CC (12:40, 1:15, 3:45) 6:45, 7:15, 9:45
• Trolls 3D DVS CC (1:45, 3:15) 4:15, 7:45, 9:15, 10:15
Ae Dil Hai Mushkil 3:25, 9:40
Inferno DVS CC (3:50) 9:25
Jack Reacher: Never Go Back DVS CC (12:30) 6:55
Ouija: Origin of Evil DVS CC (12:50) 6:40
Tyler Perry's Boo! A Madea Halloween DVS CC (1:15, 3:45) 7:15, 9:45
The Accountant DVS CC (12:40, 3:40) 6:35, 9:35
The Girl on the Train DVS CC 10:25

CHEEKTOWAGA

Regal Walden Galleria Stadium 16 & RPX
1 WALDEN GALLERIA DR., CHEEKTOWAGA
844-462-7342-1777
Almost Christmas DVS CC (1:00) 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
Arrival DVS CC (1:30) 4:30, 7:30, 10:30
• Doctor Strange DVS CC (1:10) 4:10, 7:15
• Doctor Strange 3D DVS CC 10:15 pm
Hacksaw Ridge DVS CC (12:00, 3:15) 6:30, 9:45
• Doctor Strange DVS RPX CC 5:00 pm
• Doctor Strange 3D DVS RPX CC (2:10) 8:00, 11:00
• Trolls DVS CC (11:10, 1:45) 4:15, 6:45, 9:30
• Trolls 3D DVS CC (12:10, 2:45) 5:15, 7:45, 10:20
Inferno DVS CC (11:30, 2:30) 6:00, 9:20
Ouija: Origin of Evil DVS CC (11:50, 3:00) 5:45, 8:15, 10:50
Tyler Perry's Boo! A Madea Halloween DVS CC (11:20, 2:20) 5:30, 8:30, 11:00

EAST AURORA

Aurora Theatre
673 MAIN STREET, EAST AURORA 716-652-1660
Doctor Strange 2:00, 5:00, 7:30

HAMBURG

Hamburg Palace Theatre
31 BUFFALO ST., HAMBURG 716-649-2295
Doctor Strange 4:00, 6:30

Dipson McKinley Mall 6
3701 MCKINLEY PKWY, HAMBURG 716-824-3479
Bad Moms 2:50, 7:10, 9:30
Bridget Jones's Baby 2:20, 7:20
Finding Dory 11:30, 1:50, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00
Ghostbusters 12:00, 4:50
Hell or High Water 9:50 pm
Jason Bourne 9:10 pm
Kubo and the Two Strings 12:40, 5:00
Pete's Dragon 11:50, 2:10, 4:30, 6:50
Suicide Squad 1:00, 3:50, 6:30, 9:20
The Secret Life of Pets 11:40, 1:40, 4:10, 6:20, 8:30

LANCASTER

Flix Stadium 10 CC, DVS
6101 TRANSIT RD., LANCASTER 716-668-3549
Doctor Strange 3D DVS CC 11:15, 9:45
Doctor Strange DVS CC 1:45, 4:15, 6:45
Doctor Strange 3D 11:15, 9:45
Trolls 3D 1:00, 3:15, 8:40
Almost Christmas 11:40, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:50
Arrival 11:30, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 8:00, 9:30
Doctor Strange 12:30, 1:45, 3:00, 4:15, 5:30, 6:45, 8:00
Hacksaw Ridge 12:30, 3:40, 6:35, 9:30
Inferno 11:20, 1:55, 4:30, 7:05, 9:40
Shut In 11:50, 2:15, 4:45, 7:20, 9:40
Trolls 11:30, 12:15, 1:45, 2:30, 4:00, 4:45, 5:45, 6:30, 7:15

LOCKPORT

Historic Palace Theatre
2 EAST AVE, LOCKPORT 716-438-1130
No Films Showing Today

NIAGARA FALLS

Four Seasons Cinema
2020 MILITARY RD., NIAGARA FALLS 716-297-1991
The Girl on the Train 1:30, 4:00, 7:20
Sully 2:00, 4:30, 7:30
Storks 1:30, 4:00, 7:20
The Secret Life of Pets 2:00, 4:30, 7:00
Deepwater Horizon 2:00, 4:30, 7:00
Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children 1:30, 4:00, 7:00

Regal Niagara Falls Stadium 12
720 BUILDERS WAY, NIAGARA FALLS
844-462-7342-275
Almost Christmas DVS CC (12:25, 3:40) 6:50, 9:40
Arrival DVS CC (1:25) 4:45, 7:40, 10:25
• Doctor Strange DVS CC (12:30, 1:30) 4:30, 7:30, 9:25
Shut In CC (1:10) 4:40, 7:25, 9:00
Hacksaw Ridge DVS CC (12:20, 3:25) 6:30, 9:45
• Doctor Strange 3D DVS CC (1:00) 4:00, 4:30, 7:00, 7:30, 10:30, 10:20
• Trolls DVS CC (1:15, 3:15, 3:45) 7:15, 9:45
• Trolls 3D DVS CC (12:45) 6:40, 9:15
Inferno DVS CC (3:50) 10:10
Jack Reacher: Never Go Back DVS CC (12:40, 3:35) 6:45, 10:30
Tyler Perry's Boo! A Madea Halloween DVS CC (1:05) 4:10, 7:35, 10:15
The Accountant DVS CC (12:50) 7:05

ORCHARD PARK

Regal Quaker Crossing Stadium 18
3450 AMELIA DRIVE, ORCHARD PARK
844-462-7342-277
Almost Christmas DVS CC (11:15, 2:00) 4:40, 7:20, 10:10
Arrival DVS CC (11:25, 2:10) 4:55, 7:40, 10:30
Shut In CC (12:00, 2:40) 5:10, 7:30, 10:05
• Doctor Strange DVS CC (11:30, 12:10, 12:50, 2:20, 3:20) 5:05, 6:30, 7:50, 9:20, 10:40
• Doctor Strange 3D DVS CC 4:10, 7:10, 10:00
Hacksaw Ridge DVS CC (12:20, 3:30) 6:40, 9:55
• Trolls DVS CC (11:20, 12:30, 2:05, 3:00) 4:30, 5:20, 7:00, 8:00, 9:30
• Trolls 3D DVS CC (11:40) 10:20
Inferno DVS CC (11:50, 3:10) 6:20, 9:35
Jack Reacher: Never Go Back DVS CC (1:50) 7:05
Tyler Perry's Boo! A Madea Halloween DVS CC 4:35, 9:50
The Accountant DVS CC (12:40, 3:50) 6:50, 9:45

SPRINGVILLE

Joylan Theatre
11 W. MAIN ST., SPRINGVILLE 716-592-7402
Doctor Strange 4:00, 7:00

WILLIAMSVILLE

Dipson Eastern Hills Cinema 3 CC, DVS
4545 TRANSIT RD., WILLIAMSVILLE 716-632-1080
A Man Called Ove 11:30, 4:30
American Pastoral 12:00, 2:20, 4:40, 7:00
Certain Women 11:40, 2:00, 4:20, 7:30
Gimme Danger 2:10, 7:15

Regal Transit Center Stadium 18 & IMAX
6707 TRANSIT RD., WILLIAMSVILLE 844-462-7342-281
• Doctor Strange: An IMAX 3D Experience DVS IMAX CC 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30
Space Jam 20th Anniversary 2:00, 7:00
Almost Christmas DVS CC (11:20, 2:00) 4:50, 7:40, 10:40
Arrival DVS CC (12:50) 4:10, 7:10, 10:20
Shut In CC (2:35) 5:05, 7:35, 10:05
• Doctor Strange DVS CC (1:00, 3:00) 4:00, 7:00, 9:00, 10:00
• Doctor Strange 3D DVS CC (12:00, 12:30, 3:30) 6:00, 6:30, 9:30
Hacksaw Ridge DVS CC (11:50, 3:20) 6:50, 10:15
• Trolls DVS CC (11:40, 2:10, 3:40) 4:40, 6:20, 7:30, 9:40
• Trolls 3D DVS CC (12:20, 1:10, 2:50) 5:20, 7:00, 8:50, 10:10
Inferno DVS CC (12:35, 3:45) 6:45, 9:45
Jack Reacher: Never Go Back DVS CC (12:25, 3:25) 6:35, 9:35
Ouija: Origin of Evil DVS CC (11:15) 4:20, 9:45
Tyler Perry's Boo! A Madea Halloween DVS CC (11:25, 2:05) 4:35, 7:15, 9:55
The Accountant DVS CC (12:05, 3:10) 6:40, 9:50
Middle School: The Worst Years of My Life DVS CC (3:50) 9:10
The Girl on the Train DVS CC (12:40, 3:35) 6:25, 9:15
Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children CC (12:45) 6:15
Sully DVS CC (11:30, 1:55) 4:25, 6:55, 9:20

DRIVE-IN THEATERS

Delevan Twin Drive-In
ROUTE 16, DELEVAN 716-496-5000
Call theater for showtimes

Transit Drive-In
6655 S. TRANSIT ROAD, LOCKPORT 716-625-8535
No Films Showing Today

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